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Yasa language

Iyasa (Yasa, Yassa) is a Bantu language of Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea by Ndowe coastal fishing people. It is also spoken by Pygmies, perhaps Babongo, in Gabon.

Iyasa also goes by the names Bongwe, Lyaasa, and Maasa. Dialects are *Bweko*, *Vendo*, *Bodele*, *Marry*, *One*, *Asonga*, *Bomui*, *Mogana*, *Mooma*, *Mapanga*. It may in turn be a dialect of Kombe. Speakers report that Kombe and Iyasa are almost perfectly mutually intelligible.[4]

Iyasa	
Bongwe	
Native to	Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon
Ethnicity	Yasa and Pygmies[1]
Native speakers	2,400 in Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea (2000–2011)[1] unknown number in Gabon[1]
Language family	Niger–Congo ▪ Atlantic–Congo ▪ Benue–Congo ▪ Bantoid ▪ Bantu (Zone A) ▪ Sawabantu (A.30) ▪ Kombe? ▪ **Iyasa**
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`yko`
Glottolog	`yasa1242 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/yasa1242)`[2]
Guthrie code	`A.33a`[3]

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Classification

Dieu and Renaud (1993) classify Iyasa as a Sawabantu language (A.30 in Guthrie classification).[5]

Geographic Distribution

Iyasa is spoken along the coast of Cameroon south of Kribi, including in the city of Campo. It is also spoken across the Ntem River in Equatorial Guinea.[6] The northernmost Iyasa village is Lolabe, 31 km south of Kribi.[4]

Sounds/Phonology

Iyasa has a seven-vowel system:[4]

Monophthong phonemes

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u
Near-close			
Close-mid	e		o
Mid			
Open-mid	ɛ		ɔ
Open		a	

It also has 22 phonemic consonants:[4]

	Bilabial		Labio-dental		Dental		Alveolar		Post-alveolar (Palato-alveolar)		Palatal		Velar		Labialized Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p						t	d				ɟ	k	g		
Implosive		ɓ						ɗ								
Affricate									tʃ	dʒ						
Fricative				v			s									h
Nasal		m						n				ɲ		ŋ		
Approximant												j			w	
Lateral approximant								l								

Grammar

Noun classes

Iyasa has 12 noun classes, as outlined in the table below (adapted from Bôt 2011 and Bouh Ma Sitna 2004):[6][4]

Class number	Prefix	Allomorphs	Example (IPA)	Translation (French)	Translation (English)
1	mù-	mʷ-	mù-tʃɛ́tʃɛ́ mw-ánà	le bébé l'enfant	baby child
2	wà-	w-	wà-dó	les femmes	women
3	mò-	m-, mʷ-, ŋ-	mò-ló ŋ-kɔ́jɛ́	la fête le pannier	party basket
4	mè-	m-, mʲ-	mè-kɔ	les panniers	baskets
5	dì-	d-, i-, dʒ-	dì-lɔ̀ ì-dàkà	l'oreille la maladie	ear illness
6	mà-	m-	mà-lɔ̀	les oreilles	ears
7	è-	èj-	è-lɛ́mi	la langue	tongue
8	ɓè-	ɓèj-	ɓè-kòndà ɓèj-ìmà	les souliers les choses	shoes things
9/10	N-	m-, n-, ŋ-, ɲ-, ø	m-bàdì n-dómì ø-sɔ̀kù	maison(s) père(s) éléphant(s)	house(s) father(s) elephant(s)
13	lì-	l-	lì-ɲɔ̀ní l-éjì	les oiseaux les soleils	birds suns
14	ɓù-	ɓʷ-	ɓù-dù ɓʷ-àló	l'âne la pirogue	donkey canoe
19	vi-	v-	vì-ɲɔ̀ní	l'oiseau	bird

References

1. Iyasa (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/yko/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Yasa" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/yasa1242). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Jouni Filip Maho, 2009. New Updated Guthrie List Online (https://web.archive.org/web/20180203191542/http://goto.glocalnet.net/mahopapers/nuglonline.pdf)
4. Bouh Ma Sitna, Charles Lwanga (2004). *Le Syntagme Nominal du Yasa*. University of Yaoundé I: Master's thesis.
5. Dieu, Michel, and Patrick Renaud. 1993. *Situation linguistique en Afrique centrale, inventaire pre@liminaire: Le Cameroun.* In Atlas Linguistique du Cameroun. Yaounde@: ACCT-CERDOTOLA-DGRST.

6. Bôt, Dieudonné Martin Luther (2011). "Le Préfixe Nominale Yasa". *Journal of West African Languages*. **38** (1): 99–122.

External links

- Iyasa page (http://www.endangeredlanguages.com/lang/558) at the Endangered Languages Project
- Homepage of the Iyasa language committee (http://www.peupleiyasa.com)
- Etomba a Iyasa Facebook group (https://www.facebook.com/groups/iyasa/)
- Paradisec has an open access collection of Roger Blench's materials (RB5 (http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/RB5)) that includes Yasa language materials

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